

Remarks to Opening Session

by Louis S. Beliczky*

This three-day symposium upon which we are embarking was designed to utilize the resources of scientists and specialists of the world involved in potential occupational and environmental health hazards of the rubber and plastics industries—the chemical industries involved in the production of monomers and polymers of extensive use and economic impact. These industries present unique environmental problems, many of which are just currently being recognized and understood. We should not only become concerned about the monomers and other additives used to make the polymers, but also the use of the polymers to make intermediate or consumer products.

Perhaps the triggering mechanism generating world-wide concern began with the an-

nouncements of angiosarcoma deaths due to worker exposure to vinyl chloride. Such unfortunate tragedies tend to erase national and international boundaries and encourage world-wide participation in programs, studies, and exchange of information to minimize and/or control such further occurrences.

This symposium was specifically designed to permit world-renowned scientists to present their findings and experiences which will assist occupational and environmental health specialists to assess or reassess harmful factors of worker or consumer exposure.

This symposium is the product of a collaborative effort and sponsored jointly by the World Health Organization and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

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